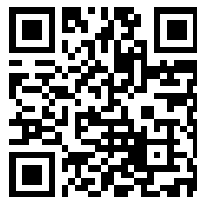

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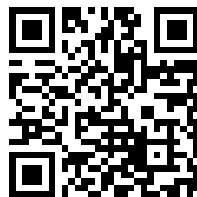
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Norse Elements in English Dialects.

(A Survey of the Study).

By

Professor GEORGE T. FLOM,
A.M., Ph.D.

The University of Illinois.

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NORSE ELEMENTS IN ENGLISH DIALECTS.

(A SURVEY OF THE STUDY).

By Professor GEORGE T. FLOM, A.M., Ph.D.

The University of Illinois.

THE scientific study of Scandinavian-English linguistic relations dates, as we know, from Erik Brate's memorable treatise on Northern loanwords in the *Ormulum* published in Paul and Braune's *Beiträge* in 1883. In that work the author formulated certain phonological tests and applied these in a study of the vocabulary of one particular Middle English monument with such sound philological method, that his verdict became definitive in the great majority of the two hundred and forty words there discussed. The criteria Brate adopted were principally formal. They were, in part, such as are based upon differences between English and Norse which find their explanation in a primitive differentiation in North Germanic, as e.g., *trigg*, 'faithful, secure,' from Old Danish *trygger* (or Old Norse *tryggr*) as opposed to Old English *treow*; or, again, they were based upon specific English or West Saxon development where Old Norse, and indeed all the Scandinavian languages at that time, represented an earlier condition, as O.E. *ā* = O.N. *æi* (Germanic *ai*); O.E. *ea* = O.N. *qu* (Germanic *au*), or the West Saxon palatalization of *k* (*c*), *sk*, and *g* in e.g. *cirice*, 'church,' *scîr*, 'clear' and *zeat*, 'gate.' The orthographic principles which find such consistent expression in the *Ormulum* supplied the investigator of its Norse elements with tests which are not elsewhere available and made possible a more exact determination of the Scandinavian provenience of a series

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of words whose normal spelling would have nothing to stamp them as un-English. Thus *hannd* 'hand' and *ganngen*, 'to go,' as not sharing in the Middle English vowel lengthening before *nd* and *ng*, are therefore not from native Middle English *hānd* and *gāng*, but from Old Danish *hand* and *ganga*, which have the corresponding short vowel, such lengthening not having operated in Scandinavian linguistic territory.¹

Brate's results were a distinct and a very significant contribution both to the history of English and to the study of its Scandinavian element. It showed that Scandinavian words were present in large numbers in that particular monument of Midland English and therefore also that Scandinavian influence was very extensive in that particular region. It established by formal criteria the Scandinavian origin of a body of Middle English words, most of which were in general use, many of which passed into standard speech, not a few of which, finally, are still current in the modern dialects, particularly of the North of England. The conservative attitude of the author and the method he employed had a healthy effect upon the study at a time when etymological vagaries of all sorts were to be met with wherever Norse-English relations were discussed. I cannot help regretting, however, that Brate's investigation was not followed by similar studies of the Scandinavian element in other Midland and Northern texts. Such special investigations would have been materially facilitated by the fact that the ground had already been broken and the problems stated—as far as Midland English was concerned. Investigations of Northern texts would, however, have had to be carried on in the light of knowledge of the varied development of native English in all parts of Northern England and Scotland. Had such studies been made we should have been able to determine with far greater

¹ Possible shortening in certain cases as a native change is, however, considered by the author. See discussion, § 9.

accuracy than we now can, the extent and the nature of the Scandinavian factor in English texts and in modern English speech, and therefore also incidentally the extent of the racial admixture of English, Norsemen, and Danes, in the different parts of England and Scotland in the age of Viking settlement.

The bearing of Brate's results upon the study of the Scandinavian element in northern English dialects was, in part, quite indirect. Only to a limited extent are the criteria that obtain in Midland Middle English, also applicable to the Northern dialects of to-day. The history of these dialects is so different from that of Southern English that the problems one is confronted with here are of quite another character. And the details of that history for the different parts of Northern England and Scotland have as yet been investigated only in part. The investigator, therefore, is constantly beset with difficulties, which are often of such a character as to make it impossible for him to decide with anything like certainty, upon the history of the form and the ultimate source of the word.¹

Scandinavian contributions to the vocabulary of Northern English were of course extensive, and the evidence of Scandinavian influence, even beyond the domain of the vocabulary, are clear. But it becomes increasingly difficult as we go northward to determine to what extent such influence is present, or even to decide, in many cases, whether a word is borrowed or not, for the simple reason that criteria which farther south are conclusive, here fail utterly of proving anything. There were even in O'd English times certain significant differences between West Saxon and Old Northumbrian. These were due, in part, to the absence in the North of certain changes that characterise the Saxon form of Old English. They were, however, also due in no small measure to the development in the North of certain progressive features

¹ See also chapter vi. in Wyld's admirable volume on *The Historical Study of the Mother Tongue*, New York, 1906.

which are lacking in Southern Old English, and only gradually become established there in the Middle English period. It is important for us to bear in mind that English was even in its origins a somewhat composite language, Germanic to be sure, but growing up out of several dialects that already on the continent may be assumed to have taken on distinct individualities. Thus, while the Anglo-Frisian group occupies a position intermediate between German on the one hand and North-Germanic on the other, the South and the North of England exhibit linguistically a character, according to which the former is more purely West Germanic, while Northern or Anglian Old English has entered upon a course of development along lines which were already fully established within the Scandinavian branch.

The most striking fact of Northern English in the latter part of the Old English period is the extent to which the old grammatical forms have been levelled and the suffixal symbols of inflexion been replaced by prepositions. No doubt we have here to do with the influence of race mixture (as Celtic and English), so in part at least. To what extent it may also be due to the inability of the Scandinavians to learn the English inflexions and to the introduction by them of prepositions which to them were clearer, it would of course not be easy to say. We can conceive that they as invaders did not make much effort at mastering the English forms; and also that the English, while acquiring the language of the invaders and becoming themselves bilingual, soon lost the mastery over their own inflexional forms and gradually lapsed into what was at first, of course, laxer ways of speech.

The early development of the phrasal possessive (*of* + dative) in the North is no doubt in a measure due to the speech of the Scandinavian settlers in which prepositional constructions were farther advanced than in English. This has been suggested recently by C. E. Bale in a thesis on *The Syntax of the Genitive Case*

in the Lindisfarne Gospels, University of Iowa, 1907. With racial and linguistic conditions as they were in the Danelaw, during the last two centuries of the O.E. period and later, it need not surprise us that the Scandinavians should have had a very definite influence upon English syntactical development as well as upon the inflexions. In his *Growth and Structure of the English Language*, which, it seems to me, represents the maturest product of English scholarship upon the history of English that we have, Otto Jespersen discussed briefly certain cases of probable Danish influence upon some fundamental features of word-order and structure in English. While a series of investigations would have to be undertaken before we should be equipped with sufficient evidence on which to base a definitive verdict on the points in question, there are several cases where the probability of Scandinavian influence is exceedingly strong. The pre-position of the dependent genitive is something that quite early becomes characteristic of the Scandinavian languages as opposed to the post-position of the genitive in German. There is good reason for believing with Jespersen that the pre-positive genitive, which on English soil first appears in the North, has some relation to the same word order in Old Norse-Danish. I believe, nevertheless, that also this phenomenon demands a fuller investigation. But these things belong more especially to the domain of the history of English as a whole, and have been mentioned here only because they would seem to represent early Scandinavian features in Northern English, and are especially interesting because they also are among the many Northern contributions to literary English.

On the side of vocabulary and phraseology Northern English, particularly the modern dialects, contain much that is quite foreign to the South and to standard speech. Here the material is much more tangible and cases of loan are often very clear. Idiomatic expressions and

combinations of words that are un-English, but which are characteristic of Norse may with certainty be put down as loans. But also here care must be exercised. We must be sure that these are and always have been contrary to English modes of expression. We must, furthermore, have the necessary evidence that they were established in Norse at the time when Norse influence was operative in English. A clear case in point is the Cumberland expression *lig on*, 'to be of importance.' A thing is said to 'lig on' when it is important that it should be done. It is a combination of a verb and a preposition (resp, adverb) which is nowhere evidenced in pure English. Its source is clearly the O.N. *liggja á*, 'to be important or urgent'; examples, *mér liggr á*, it is important for me—and *mun þar stórt á liggja*, 'it is an urgent or serious matter.'¹ But the cases are not always so simple. A glance through the pages of some of the early glossaries published by the English Dialect Society shows that early collectors were often, and indeed could at that time not help being, misled by Norse and English dialectal parallels. We recognise now that many of these turns of expression were also good English once, and appear in dialectal speech at the present time as survivals from past periods of English.

I said above that the question of loan in the vocabulary is a more tangible one. And yet also here each separate word requires to be weighed carefully and the forms are often elusive enough. For here the question is in a very large number of cases closely bound up with the whole problem of the phonology of Northern English. The most conspicuous departure of the North away from the vowel-system of the South is that which affected the O.E. *ā*. In southern and central England and in standard speech the long *a* changed by process of progressive rounding until in standard English the

¹ The example is taken from my article on "Etymological Notes on some English Dialect Words" in Vol. IV., pp. 10-19 of *The Journal of Germanic Philology*.

resultant vowel is \bar{o}^a , while in the extreme South the rounding advanced to the form \bar{u} , or u^o . The Northern process was, as we know, a very different one. Here the \bar{a} undergoes a change of progressive palatalization, until the resultant form is \bar{e} , or in some localities \bar{i} . Here, then, in words of the type 'stone' (*stuon*); *staine* (*sti'n*); 'home' (*huom*); *hame* (*hi'm*) the North and the South of England have separated as far as they possibly could.

The development thus outlined is one which not only differentiated Northern English from standard speech, but also brought its vowel system a long step nearer to that of the Scandinavian languages. It gave to a whole category of English words, including the preterite singular of the strong verbs of the first gradation series (type O.E. *drīfan*, *drāf*, O.N. *drīfa*, *dræiv*), a Scandinavian appearance, while in reality they were native English forms. It is, therefore, not surprising that early collectors of dialect texts should have come to regard all such words as derived from Old Norse; *haime* from O.N. *hæim*, *haile* from O.N. *hæil*, *raive* from O.N. *ræif*, thus run the etymological equations. The fact that some of these words, as *strade* (< *strīdan*), did not exist in O.N. only served as evidence of the very far-reaching character of the Norse influence in this group of words;—the native vowel \bar{o} in literary English, had been supplanted by the Norse vowel ($\bar{æi}$ [*ei*]>*e*). No one believes now any longer that Northern dialectal \bar{e} is, even in the remotest way, due to the O.N. vowel; but it is less than a score of years ago since that view was given up. While any one of these words, in so far as it has an O.N. equivalent, *might* be from O.N., the theory that the native English vowel had in all such words been supplanted, is, we now know, quite untenable, and indeed, in itself a very unlikely theory. For the sounds of a language are rarely influenced by those of another. It has not been shown

that a single English vowel has been modified in its course of development by Norse influence.¹

The conservative character of Northern English on the side of certain consonants, according to which it remains closer to Scandinavian conditions, while the South has made radical departures therefrom, has given still greater trouble to the student of the loan elements of the dialects. The Scandinavian *appearance* of a word became its principal test of origin, and while the correct source is often pointed out, the results are more often wholly erroneous. Thus Robert Ferguson in *The Dialect of Cumberland* (London, 1873), correctly derives the preposition *amell* 'between, among,' from O.N. *amilli*, and the verb *fest* 'to send out cattle to other farms to be grazed' from O.N. *festa*, 'to settle, stipulate, make a bargain'; but he is also led so far astray as to find the source of Cumberland *yable* or *able* in O.N. *afla*, which, he says, denotes both 'to be able and to possess or acquire.' Such words as *kist*, 'chest,' *rig*, 'ridge' and *mirk*, 'dark,' are (of course, erroneously) regularly equated with the corresponding O.N. words in such dialect works as William Dickinson's *Glossary of Words and Phrases of Cumberland* (Whitehaven, 1859), *The Dialect of Leeds* published by John Russell Smith (London, 1862), and Wm. Carr's *Dialect of Craven* (1828). In this practice of finding in the Norse stem the source of English words, wherever possible, these authors were, however, merely following in the footsteps of James Jamieson's once much celebrated *Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language*. According to this writer it was Old Scandinavian that was the parent speech of Lowland Scottish (and Northern English) and he saw in the Old Norse and the "Sveo-Gothic" stems

¹ It is, of course, quite a different question as to whether the vowel of a group of words frequently associated, or of an inflexional category (as the preterite of a strong verb class) may have had its form modified by the same group or class in Norse.

the nearest related forms of the ancient language of Lowland Scotland.

While the attribution of almost every specifically dialectal feature of Northern English to Scandinavian influence was erroneous, and often had its source in a false conception of the relation that originally obtained between the two languages, we of to-day need to be on our guard, perhaps, lest we go too far in the other extreme. I find sometimes now evidence of an undue effort to force dialectal words and forms of expression into the mould of Old and (native) Middle English words. That Scandinavian elements are present in very considerable number in the dialects of the North and the Northern Midlands, has once for all been established. That the Northerner rarely speaks an English sentence without using one or more Norse words, is well known. That the influence extends even beyond the vocabulary into the inflexions and other structural features of his daily speech, we also know. We know that a considerable portion of that which gives Northern English its distinct individuality is of Scandinavian origin and owes its presence there to extensive racial admixture¹; so extensive indeed that in Lincolnshire, Yorkshire, Westmoreland, and Cumberland the Scandinavian element undoubtedly preponderated. But we also know that a still large number of those things which are characteristically Northern in English, have arisen by process of regular development on the basis of native Old English material. The problem becomes one of sifting the two, separating the one from the other by the aid of all the available facts relative to English dialectal laws and changes and in the light of all available information bearing upon the subject.

The first scholarly effort to explain English dialectal words from Old Norse appears, I believe, in the Cleasby-

¹ I am aware that I am using the word race here somewhat too narrowly, for in 'race,' Norseman and Englishman, and the Northern German, are one in origin.

Vigfusson *Icelandic-English Dictionary* (Oxford, 1873). It was natural that Vigfusson, an Icelander, should have been attracted to that study. Under almost every article in the Dictionary are given Early English or dialectal words whose forms are illustrated by the O.N. words. The great interest that subsequently came to attach to the study among Anglicists was no doubt first inspired by this pioneer work of Vigfusson. In 1876 Rev. W. W. Skeat issued a pamphlet as a supplement to the Oxford dictionary, entitled: *A List of English Words, the Etymology of which is illustrated by comparison with Icelandic*. This list, which was intended chiefly to throw light on literary English, included a large amount of dialect material, which had been gathered for the most part from Haliwell's *Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial English*. The index, as Reverend Skeat informs us in the Preface, had been prepared under the guidance of Dr. Vigfusson, and Skeat disclaims any wish to decide on the nature of the relation that exists between the words compared. In this list was brought together for the first time a very considerable body of dialect words with their Norse parallels, the true origin of many of these being here also suggested in the stem cited for illustration. The author exercised great care, however, refraining in almost every single case from indicating etymological equations. The compilation was intended "only to clear the way for more discriminating treatment; and," he continues, "I am of the opinion that the present state of English etymology is such, that all haste, over-confidence and dogmatism are much to be avoided." In his *Etymological Dictionary of the English Language* (1882), and in numerous editions of Middle English texts (as *Chaucer*, *Havelok the Dane*, Barbour's *Bruce*), Skeat has supplied many a helpful hint and pointed out the specific Scandinavian source of many a M.E. word which still lives on in the dialects, although he too has at times gone a little too far in the attribution of English words to Norse sources.

In their *Icelandic Prose Reader* (pages 558-559), published in 1879, Vigfusson and Powell dealt briefly with Norse words in English. They gave there a list of loans and offer certain rules by which to decide the source of a word. These are interesting as being, I believe, the first effort at formulating definite criteria. They are, however, rather general in character as "the absence of the words in Anglo-Saxon poetry," the "Norse character" of a word, and "phonetic reasons," the latter being illustrated by the words *odd*, *happy*, *ransack*, *skin*, *raise*, *fellow*, *window*, *steak*, and *breath*. Four years later appeared Brate's investigation upon the *Ormulum*, which defined much more specifically a series of tests based on form and meaning, and which gave a truly scientific basis for the future study of the subject. I have above spoken of the significance of Brate's work, at the same time pointing out, however, that his tests, definitive as they were for the M.E. monument in question, are wholly inadequate for English dialects. Until the phonology of the dialects could be much more fully investigated than had yet been done, the study of its vocabulary and forms with reference to loan-elements could never be satisfactorily conducted. Scientific certainty was possible in none of the considerable number of cases where the peculiar development of the North had obliterated the phonological differences that once existed as between English and Norse.

During the next decade a series of publications appeared which represented a great forward step in English dialect study. These were, first, a series, a dialect investigations, among which must be especially mentioned Joseph Wright's *A Grammar of the Dialect of Windhill*, issued by *The English Dialect Society* in 1892. Wright aimed to furnish specialists in English philology with an accurate account of the phonology and accidence of a particular dialect. The great value of the work lay in the method of treatment and in the accuracy of the work, guaranteed, as it was, by the

author's statement in the preface, that "I spoke the dialect pure and simple until I was practically grown up."¹

Of still greater significance for the study of English dialects as a whole was the work of Alexander J. Ellis on *Early English Pronunciation* (1889), particularly Volume V. which treated of *The Existing Phonology of English Dialects*, of which an abridgment under the title: *English Dialects, their Homes and Sounds*, was published the following year, Ellis's monumental work is too well known to require anything but a mention here by me. As an effort at investigating the correspondence of writing with speech from the oldest period down to existing received and dialectal forms with a systematic notation of spoken sounds, it stands without a parallel in any other country. It is due in a considerable measure to that work that the historical study of English sounds, and particularly of that of the dialects, has been carried forward with so much success in recent years. It may be in place here to observe that the first studies which found embodiment in Ellis's treatment of dialect pronunciation were begun as far back as 1868, and in 1875 he presented before the Philological Society a paper on the classification of English dialects. This was followed in subsequent years by papers upon various English dialects before the same body down to 1884, those for the three last years being on the dialects of the Midlands and the eastern counties (April, 1882), the Dialects of the northern counties (March, 1883), and those of the Lowlands of Scotland in April, 1884. The founding of *The English Dialect Society* was due very largely, I believe, to the work of Alexander Ellis.

In this connection there also suggests itself the name

¹Incidentally Wright's *Grammar* frequently throws light upon the Norse element in the Windhill Dialect. Among the words shown to be Norse are *lake* 'to play' pronounced *le'h*, and 'weak' pronounced *we'h*, for the O.E. *ā* is in Windhill *u*.

of the German scholar, Karl Luick, who, on the basis of the material contained in Ellis, has contributed more perhaps than any other scholar to the elucidation of modern dialectal and standard English.¹

The time now seemed to have arrived for a more thorough study of Scandinavian elements in English. And so we find appearing during the next few years four doctoral dissertations bearing more or less directly upon the subject. The first of these, namely, Jakob Jakobsen's *Det norrøne Sprog på Shetland*, Copenhagen, 1897, a most scholarly work, I shall merely mention here, because it deals with dialect material that is late² and of a wholly different nature from that of the English Scottish mainland. The problems here met with fall in a class by themselves, having, as they do, to deal with the present survivals of that Insular Norse which was actually spoken in the Shetlands and the Orkneys until about a hundred and fifty years ago.

From Cambridge University there appeared the following year the first systematic study of the Scandinavian element in English dialects. The work was that of Arnold Wall, and the material here gathered together was based upon the various glossaries published by the Dialect Society. Mr. Wall adopted in part Brate's tests, adding others on form and distribution, and divided the whole number of words investigated into two lists: one of such words as seemed to the author to be of undoubted Scandinavian origin; this list contained about five hundred words; the other one of about two hundred words, which might be of Scandinavian origin, but whose form did not admit of definite conclusions. The extensive field covered by Wall's work, and the complexity of the material in question, made a thorough-going investi-

¹ Thus, e.g., in *Untersuchungen zur englischen Lautgeschichte*, Strassburg, 1895, and in several articles in *Archiv. für das Studium der neueren Sprachen*.

² Late in the sense of being so recently a part of living Norse speech—the *Norn* of Shetland. For fuller account of Jakobsen's work see my review in *Modern Language Notes*, 1902, 110-113.

gation of each word, based on all its variants, extremely difficult.¹ He made some valuable observations upon such questions as popular Old English and non-palatization in the Northern dialects; of the latter much more could have been made, however, by an examination of Ellis's phonetic notations and Wright's Grammar. His brief treatment of the question of O.N. *æi*, O.E. *ā*, and words of the type *stane*, *hail*, etc. (§33-35) was quite inadequate, and in part antiquated. But the work represents, nevertheless, a genuine and welcome contribution because of the extensive lists of dialect words offered.

The third and fourth doctorate theses referred to above both appeared in 1900. One of these was my own work upon *Scandinavian Influence on Southern Lowland Scotch*, which was published as Number I. in *Columbia University Germanic Studies*; the investigations, the results of which were embodied in this thesis, were carried on during a year of study in England, Denmark, and Germany in 1898-1899. The second was an exhaustive study by Erik Björkman, Part I. of which appeared under the title *Scandinavian Loan-words in Middle English*, from Uppsala University in 1900; Part II. was published in 1902.

My own investigation was an attempt at determining the extent of the Norse element in the English language north of the border, as represented in Scottish literature from Barbour to Burns; to a limited extent Lowland dialect words were included by way of illustration. In addition to the tests of form that seemed to me applicable I used others of meaning and distribution, stressing, as I believe, the latter somewhat unduly, and being led thereby in some cases to decide for the Scandinavian origin of words I now feel are capable of a different

¹ A sufficient examination of the dialectal forms of the words *goun*, 'heed,' *fested*, 'engaged,' *gob*, 'to prate,' *vait*, 'to soak flax,' f.e., would have shown clearly that these are of Norse origin, though relegated to "List B" of doubtful cases by Wall. On the other hand, some of the words of "List A" are hardly of Norse origin.

explanation. My word-list indicates that there are about four hundred and fifty words of Norse source in Scottish literature, the majority of which are still current in the dialects of the Lowlands, particularly the counties of Roxburgh, Dumfries, Kircudbright and Ayr. The nature of my material was in some important cases such, that the solution of the Norse or English origin of a word was possible only by a study of the dialectal phonology of the stems in question. One especially interesting problem lay in the question of the source of a number of words with the stem-vowel \bar{e} variously spelled, *ai*, *ay*, *ei*, *ey*, or *a* with the final *e*. The phonology of Norse loans showed that O.N. *ai* and O.E. \bar{a} both appear as \bar{e} . The test of sound therefore does not here operate. Were *haile*, *laike*, *haime*, *hailse* (to greet) from O.N. *hæil*, *læik*, *hæim*, *hæilsa*, or were they from O.E. *hāl*, *lāc*, *hām*, *healsian*?

The number of this class of words was considerable. The test of orthography set up for the dialects by Wall, according to which the representatives of O.E. \bar{a} do not appear with the diphthongal spelling, fails, in the Scottish loans, where there is no such practice observed. O.E. \bar{a} and O.N. *æi* have completely coincided at an early time in Scotland, and are nowhere differentiated in the written symbols. A reference to Ellis's interlinear texts showed me that the two sounds did not coincide everywhere in Scotland and England. In Ellis's D33 in Southern Scotland,¹ which includes Roxburgh, Selkirk and the eastern two-thirds of Dumfries, the modern representatives of O.E. \bar{a} and O.N. *æi* are kept apart to this day, the former being pronounced with a fracture (as *hiēm*, e.g.), while the latter preserved the *e*-vowel. A similar separation of the two is also found to exist in Dialect 31 (= Westmoreland, Cumberland, except the northern extremity, northern Lancashire, the hilly parts of Western Yorkshire and South Durham). The test of form which here is preserved, then, may also

¹ The Dialect treated in Murray's *The Dialect of the Southern Counties of Scotland*.

be applied to the same words in other parts of Southern Scotland and Northern England.¹ Specifically it may be said that the use of the test to the material in my lists showed that Sco. *haime*, *baine*, *haile*, and *staine*, are native words; they regularly have the forms *heeam beean*, etc., in the regions specified. Notable instances which are shown to be of Norse derivation are: *blaike*, 'yellow, pale,' (O.N. *blæikr*); *claime*, 'to adhere,' (O.N. *klæima*); *flay*, 'to frighten,' (O.N. *fleya*); *laike*, 'to play,' (O.N. *læika*); *lave*, 'remainder,' (O.N. *læifr*); *rate*, 'to bleach,' (O.N. *röyta*)²; *slake*, 'to smear, daub,' (O.N. *slæikja*); *slape*, 'sippary,' (O.N. *s'æipr*); *snape*, 'to restrain,' (O.N. *snöypa*).

The date of the fracture has a bearing upon the question of loan-words also. Clearly the base was \bar{e} , \bar{e} or the much more recent \bar{i} . F. J. Curtis (*Anglia* XVI. and XVII.), in a study of the *Clariodus*, believed the fracture to have arisen on the basis of \bar{i} ; that is, it is a diphthongal development of i . Luick, however, holds that it was the \bar{e} -vowel that developed the fracture. It seems clear to me that the point of departure must have been \bar{e} or \bar{e} . Were \bar{i} the basis of the fracture we must assume two M.E. \bar{e} 's, one from O.E. \bar{a} , the other from O.N. ai ; the latter would then have to be assumed to have been diphthongal, and later to have become simplified to \bar{e} . In this case it becomes difficult to see how M.E. \bar{e} (< O.E. \bar{a}) should have become \bar{e}^i without coinciding with M.E. \bar{e}^i (< \bar{e}) on the way. Even if we assume that the M.E. \bar{e} < O.E. \bar{a} was an open one (= \bar{e}) and M.E. \bar{e} from O.N. ai was close, = \bar{e} , the difficulty would still be the same. A proof of the fact that the fracture began on the basis of \bar{e} lies in its distribution in the modern dialects. Thus I find that the fracture $e\partial$, $a\partial$, etc., is established to-day in much wider extent than that of $i\partial$, which indicates that

¹ Perhaps, however, only within a certain distance, as where the racial conditions were quite different other considerations again enter.

² Not from L. German *roten*.

the latter is but the last stage of palatalization of a falling diphthong, which started as \bar{e}^i .¹ In other words the fracture of vowels is a characteristic of northern English dialects; its scope goes far beyond that of i , and existed long before $i\bar{u}$ appeared as a fracture-vowel. Where the O.E. \bar{a} and O.N. $\bar{æ}i$ have coincided the process must have been:

O.E. $\bar{a} > \bar{e} > \bar{e}$

O.N. $\bar{æ}i > \bar{e}^i > \bar{e}^i > \bar{e}$; while, where they were always distinguished, the process probably was—

O.E. $\bar{a} > \bar{e} > \bar{e}\bar{u} > \bar{e}\bar{u} > i\bar{u}$ and

O.N. $\bar{æ}i > \bar{e}^i > \bar{e}^i > \bar{e}$.

This will also make clear why \bar{e}^i of late M.E. could not have coincided with the vowel which was the equivalent of O.E. \bar{a} , for this had already assumed too distinct an individuality in the direction of a falling diphthong.²

It may be observed that, as Luick has shown, $-aik$ became $\bar{e}k$ in late M.E. times, after which a further fronting of the vowel took place before the consonant k ; hence the dialect form *feak*, "to twitch," from O.N. *föykja*, "to rush, drive away." The word *weak* and *bleak* are to be similarly explained, while the form *steak* would seem to have come from regions where the vowel \bar{e} prevailed also before k .³

Time will not permit of discussing Björkman's contributions to the study in his *Scandinavian Loan Words*, a work which has received well-merited recognition among Anglicists everywhere. I have, furthermore, spoken somewhat in detail of it in two reviews in American journals⁴ and do not need to repeat myself here.

¹ For illustrations see *The English Dialect Grammar*.

² For a general study of the O.N. diphthongs in English, see article by Luick in *Archiv, f. d. St. d. n. Sprachen*, CVII., pages 322-329.

³ But see Björkman, index, under each word, Kluge-Lutz *English Etymology* under *bleach*, *steak* and *weak*, and *Archiv*, CVII., p. 327.

⁴ Review of Part I. in *The Modern Language Notes* XVII., 386-391, and of Part II. in *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, V., 422-426.

Björkman's work is a more exhaustive study than any previous one, and was productive of very valuable results. The author dealt only incidentally, however, with dialect material, and it does not carry with it in these parts the same evidence of deep and conscientious study that his presentation of the M.E. material does everywhere. But no student of Norse-English relations can hereafter afford to remain in ignorance of Björkman's study on Scandinavian loanwords.

Finally, I mention, with the pleasure that every student of English dialects must feel at our possession of these works, the *English Dialect Dictionary* and the *English Dialect Grammar*, ably edited by Professor Joseph Wright of Oxford. These works represent the crowning point of the great work of the *English Dialect Society*. The former must be the constant guide of the dialect student in all questions of the distribution of dialect words and their occurrence in dialect literature. The latter will supply him with a wealth of information on the dialect phonology of a very large body of words (2,431) common to standard and dialectal speech. I cannot help voicing my regret, however, that, excellent as these works are, they were not gotten up on even broader lines. The *Dialect Dictionary* should, I believe, have had every variant pronunciation of dialect words fully recorded in phonetic transcription with reference to the home of each of such variant forms. The usefulness of the *Dialect Grammar* would have been immeasurably enhanced as regards the source and history of words if its scope had not been confined to words which the dialects have in common with literary English.

This limitation is felt especially in the study of loanwords. A very large proportion of these are confined to the dialects. As a result the *Dialect Grammar* fails to give evidence at all in our quest after the true history of this group of dialect words. And, furthermore, the dialects have for decades gradually been becoming

replaced by standard English. We are met then, again, with the question of contamination in the dialect forms of those words which the dialects now have in common with standard speech. For genuine dialect material we are thrown back upon the Dialect Dictionary; but here we miss again the accurate notation of dialectal pronunciation. While recognizing the very great worth of these works, representing years of arduous labour by patriotic and scholarly men, and feeling, as we all do, that we could not now get along without them, I believe we are lacking something yet before the dialects of England can be made to yield all the light that they contain toward the elucidation of the history of English speech. I have already indicated the kind of detailed investigations which we now need. And specifically do I believe that we ought to have undertaken such detailed investigations for those most interesting and instructive of dialects which, because of greater remoteness from the centre of culture and literary influence, have best been able to live their own life and to preserve their peculiar individuality with the nearest approach to purity. And among these are undoubtedly the dialects of the North of England, of the North of Scotland, and of the Isles.

The Viking Club, which is carrying forward with such signal success the work of elucidating the cultural relations of Great Britain and the Scandinavian North, is in a position, as no other learned organization is, to undertake such studies of those dialects that have been stamped in a special degree by the language of the Vikings.

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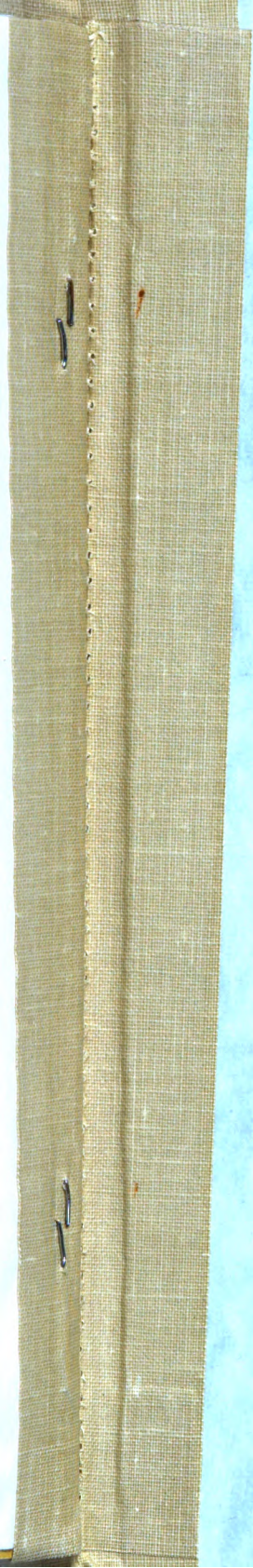
- (1) Meetings for the discussion of Papers on Northern history, literature, music, art, archæology, language, folklore, and anthropology;
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- (3) Formation of a Library of Books, MSS., maps, etc., relating to Northern history and antiquities;
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